

*Papilio dardanus* Brown ab. *obscura* ab. nov. (Lep.: Papilionidae)

A fine melanic example of a male Mimic Swallowtail, *Papilio dardanus* Brown, emerged in the breeding room of Butterfly World, Klapmuts, Cape, Republic of South Africa, in March 1997 (Plate E).



Plate E. *Papilio dardanus* Brown ab. *obscura* ab. nov. ♂ left: upperside; right: underside.

The uppersides of the wings are almost completely black. The areas that are normally yellow are heavily suffused with black/brown scales allowing only a faint trace of the normal wing markings to remain apparent beneath the dark veil. Those areas of the wings that are typically black remain darker than the remainder. On the underside, the original markings are still predominant and the suffusion of black/brown scales is much less evident than on the upperside. On the hindwing undersides, the discal band is less pronounced and dark scaling is generally reduced. The forewing undersides again show a suffusion of black/brown scales, which completely obliterates those areas which are normally yellow, including the apical spot.

It is believed that the pupae, which were purchased from the Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm, originated from the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest (Kipepo Project), Kenya. The lack of certainty as to the origin of the pupae makes it preferable not to state the race, but it is most likely to be *tibullus* Kirby.

This species is undoubtedly the most extreme example known to science of Batesian mimicry in butterflies. This fact, together with the importance of the species in genetic studies, makes this unique insect worthy of note.— LEONARD MCLEOD, 22 Maris Green, Great Shelford, Cambs CB2 5EE and GABRIELLE MCLEOD, 47 Upper Lewes Road, Brighton, Sussex BN2 3FH.